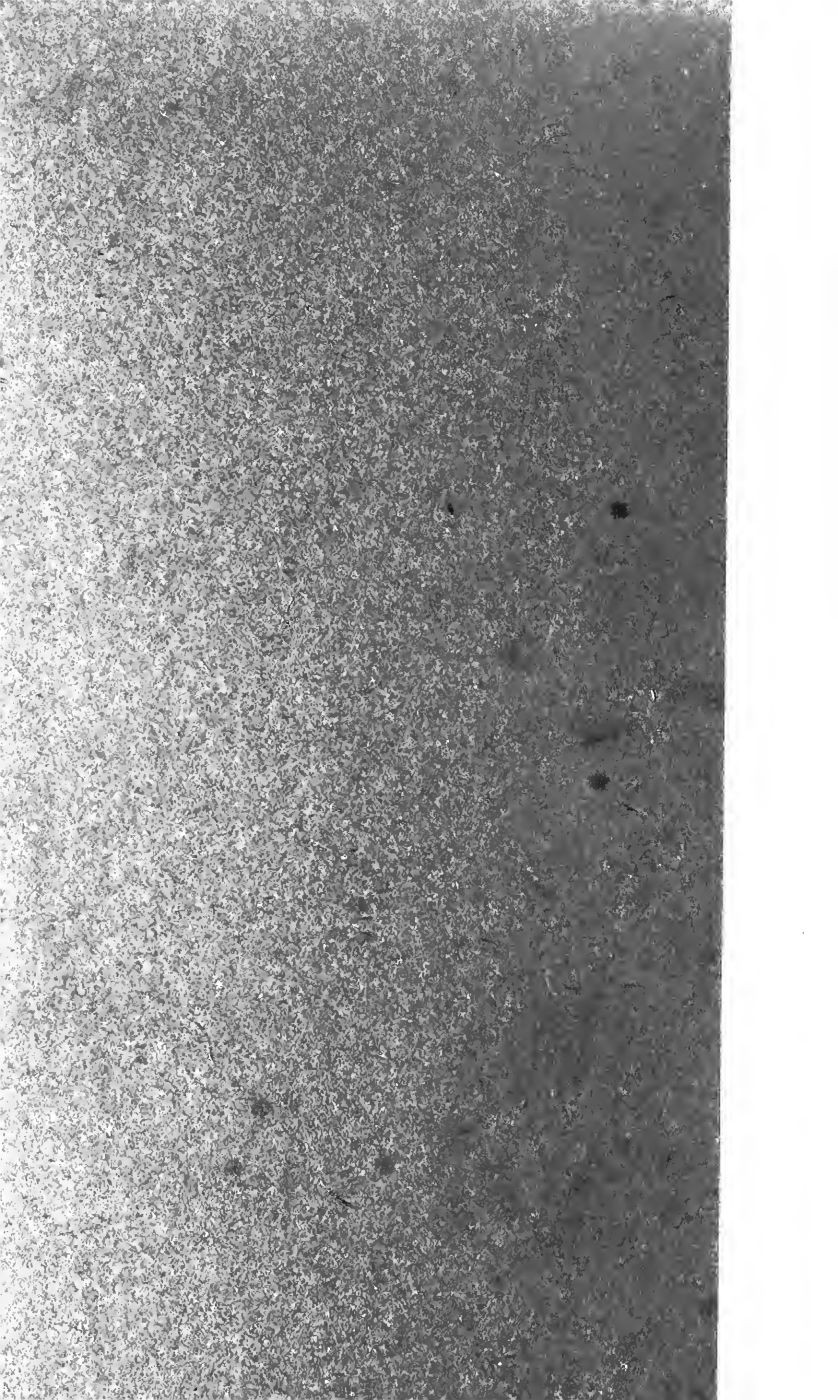




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# GOOD-LOOKING FELLOW:

A FARCE, IN ONE ACT.

BY

JAMES KENNEY & ALFRED BUNN, ESQRS.

FIRST PERFORMED AT THE  
THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT GARDEN,  
*THURSDAY, APRIL 17th, 1834.*



LONDON:

JOHN MILLER, HENRIETTA STREET,  
COVENT GARDEN,

*(Agent to the Dramatic Authors' Society.)*

1834.

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

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- Mr. Johnston, (*a wealthy old Gentleman*).. Mr. BARTLEY.
- Narcissus Briggs, (*his Nephew, Foreman to* }  
Mrs. Pliant) ..... } Mr. HARLEY.
- Frank, (*Under Shopman*) ..... Mr. MEADOWS.
- Waggoner, (*from Chelmsford*) ..... Mr. TURNOUR.
- The Widow Pliant, (*a rich Haberdasher*).. Mrs. C. JONES.
- Ellen, (*Servant to the Widow*) ..... Mrs. HUMBY.
- Marinetta, (*Servant to a Lodger in the House*) · Miss TAYLOR.

# A GOOD-LOOKING FELLOW.

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## SCENE I.

*The Interior of a Room, supposed to be at the back of a Shop, opening on a Street, which shop is seen through centre doors, and windows each side, with half curtains across. Two side-doors on the P.S., and one on the O.P. Table and chairs.*

FRANK *discovered listening at the 1st door, P.S.*

FRA. Briggs is fast asleep—(then crossing and listening at door O.P.)—and the widow not yet ready to come down. This is the very time, then, to have a little chat with my dear Ellen; and if she had only tact enough to come and look for me—Apropos! here she is!

(ELLEN *peeping in at O.P. door.*)

ELL. May I come in?

FRA. Oh, yes, my dear Ellen; it's very early, for I've only just opened the shop; and, now we are quite alone, let me give you a kiss for to-day, for yesterday, for the day before, for—

ELL. I sha'n't; pray leave me alone.

FRA. What! refuse me, after being separated a whole year?

ELL. It was your own doing.

FRA. Very true; but the instant I found an opportunity

of re-uniting us, I seized it. The Widow Pliant, our mistress, being in want of a servant, didn't I send for you all the way from Chelmsford, and an't you installed in your office ever since yesterday ?

ELL. Very pleasant, indeed, to be a maid, when one expected to be something else.

FRA. Patience, my dear little wife. I have a project in my head : Mrs. Pliant is a rich widow, about to retire from business, and I've some idea of being able to jump into her shoes.

ELL. You ! Ha ! ha !—and how, pray, when neither the one nor the other of us have a penny to bless ourselves ?

FRA. I beg your pardon ; I've one *very* valuable property : I flatter myself I have such an excellent address, (and that goes a great way in these days,) that whenever your fashionable customers arrive, I am always selected to attend to their orders. Money, to be sure, is an useful commodity ; but manners will make the money, and the man too. Therefore, my dear, be patient and discreet ; and, instead of measuring out tapes and ribbons by the yard *behind* the counter, I shall be talking by the hour *before* it. I know one, in particular, that will go mad at my good fortune.

ELL. Who ?

FRA. Our foreman, whom you haven't seen yet. He was out when you arrived, and he did not come home till late, (if he came at all,) for he is a gallant—the very Don Juan of this part of the town—a good-looking fellow, (at least the women say so,) and all the girls are in love with him ; they all swear “ by Briggs !”

ELL. (*Surprised.*) Is his name Briggs ?

FRA. Yes ; he is a townsman of ours—he came from



Chelmsford, and has not been in London above six months. You must have heard of him surely ?

ELL. (*Turning it off.*) No ; I don't remember him at all.

FRA. And at what hour will our little boy, William, arrive ?

ELL. At two exactly, by the Chelmsford waggon. The carrier's wife has promised to take charge of him on the road.

FRA. Then I'll be on the look-out to receive the little darling ; and, till we have gained our point, I have a plan to blind Mrs. Pliant about him.

ELL. A plan ?

FRA. Hush ! Here's the widow coming. She's early this morning—there's something in the wind, I'll be bound.

(*Enter MRS. PLIANT, at O. P. door, 2nd E.*)

MRS P. Oh, you are here, Ellen,—that's a good girl ; I always like to see young people rise early. But where is Narcissus ?

FRA. (*Crosses to c.*) Not up yet, Ma'am ; but I will call him if you please.

MRS. P. (*In a lackadaisical manner.*) By no means ; he has need of rest, for his health requires taking great care of. When he comes down, he shall have a cup of chocolate, that I will go and prepare for him myself.

FRA. (*Aside.*) What delicate attention !

MRS. P. Haven't you lately remarked, Frank, that for some time past he has had a short cough hanging upon him ?

FRA. Yes, Ma'am ; and I have advised him, as a sure remedy, to get married as soon as possible. (*Pointedly.*)

MRS. P. Do you think it would cure him ?

FRA. It is a sovereign remedy for all complaints ; and I have often thought of marrying, myself. (*Winking at ELLEN.*)

MRS. P. Indeed !

(*Enter MARINETTA at 2nd door P. S.*)

MARI. (*Comes down centre.*) Mrs. Pliant! Ze devil! Madame, I sal be so glad I meet wis you.

MRS. P. What's the matter, Marinetta?

MAR. Mi ladi take very ill.

MRS. P. My second-floor lodger! poor creature, what's the matter with her?

MARI. (*Hardly knowing what to say.*) Se sal be ill two day pass, and se sal go out yesterday; I tink it was cold, and se catch him again—her nerve shake very muche—and se sal faint six time all away. So I run down ze stair to lend of you a bottle zat smell, for we sal break all ours.

MRS. P. By all means; I'll look for one. (*Opens the table drawer, and looks for a smelling-bottle.*)

FRA. (*Aside to ELLEN.*) That's all gammon—*that's* not what she came for.

MARI. (*Aside.*) Zat Narcisse not here—ze ingrat! ze wretch! he hide hissself from me six day go by.

MRS. P. (*Bringing down a bottle of eau-de-cologne.*) This is the only scent I have at hand—a little eau-de-cologne—the best thing in the world to revive her. (*To FRANK.*) When Narcissus comes down, tell him he may breakfast with me, for I have some business to talk over with him.

FRA. (*Aside.*) What next, I wonder?

MARI. (*Aside.*) Breakfast wiz one anoder—very droll, I tink.

MRS. P. Ellen, go to the baker's, and desire him to send a loaf of brown bread; Narcissus prefers it, as being lighter, his chest is so delicate.

ELL. Yes, Ma'am.

(*Exit through shop, c.*)

MARI. (*Aside.*) Se take von great care of ze shopboy, I tink.

FRA. There's something at the bottom of all this.

MARI. (*To MRS. P.*) I sal not zee zat young pareson before here ?

MRS. P. No ; she only came into my service yesterday.

MARI. (*Aside.*) She too pretty ; and when I see her I am not very glad.

MRS. P. Frank, I am going to my room to regulate some accounts. (*To MARI.*) I hope your mistress will soon recover, Marinetta. (*To FRANK.*) Be sure and let me know as soon as Narcissus comes down, and do not wake him for the world. (*Exit at door O.P. 2nd E.*)

MARI. (*in a smothered rage.*) Narcisse is de villain ! and sal give me de satisfaction all at once. (*Flounces out at 2nd door, P.S.*)

FRA. What the devil's the meaning of all this ? When I mention the name of Briggs, my wife smiles, and says, " Did you say Briggs ? " Then down comes the widow, whose business I was hoping to pop into, and she orders me to tell Briggs to breakfast with her ; and then this Italian spitfire, Marinetta, bounces out of the house, calling him a villain, and insisting on immediate satisfaction ! So, amongst us all, we seem to be in a nice way. (*Listening at 1st door, P.S.*) He sleeps as sound as a top, but I must not (*imitating MRS. PLIANT*) " wake him for the world ! " There isn't a mouse stirring. (*Listens at 1st door P.S., as NARCISSUS tumbles in at the 2nd door, without a hat, and his clothes torn and in disorder.*)

NAR. (*Leaning against table, L.*) Am I at home, or am I not ? I am. The fellow hasn't quite beat my brains out, and no limb broken. I'm well out of the scrape then.

FRA. Oh, is that you, Narcissus?

NAR. Eh! Why, I begin to think it is.

FRA. Just come home? You slept out then?

NAR. Slept! I haven't closed my eyes, though I have very nearly had 'em closed for me. I have met with an accident.

FRA. An accident!

NAR. An accident. A young fellow don't go out in the middle of the night for nothing.

FRA. You went *out* for it then?

NAR. No, but I came *in* for it, and rather unexpectedly—a sort of a windfall, and a devil of a breeze it was! What I went out for I'll tell you: but mum—quite confidential.

FRA. Of course.

NAR. A charming young widow, whose name I mustn't tell, was going to be married to a very queer old gentleman, whose name I never inquired. The old story—the person rather repulsive, the purse exceedingly attractive. All was settled, when business called him abroad. In the meantime the lady and myself met at a fashionable confectioner's—the old story again: we started and gazed—our sympathies jumped—and many an evening, and part of an occasional morning, have I passed in her delightful society.

FRA. And I not find it out?

NAR. This morning, just as I was taking leave of her, as usual, we heard a loud thumping at the door.

FRA. A thumping?

NAR. Yes; it wasn't the only one! Soon after, a loud voice was heard—it was that of the queer old gentleman.

FRA. Returned suddenly to England, having got a scent, I suppose, of what was going on in his absence.

NAR. You may fancy our alarm ; Maria was in a terrible fright.

FRA. Ah, Maria's her name !

NAR. Bless me, I've betrayed myself !\* But you wont abuse my confidence ?

FRA. Oh, go on !

NAR. Well, the noise ceased ; the time slipped away ; and, in about an hour, I slipped away also. It was scarcely daylight ; I stepped lightly down the stairs, and, when I got to the darkest corner of the staircase, I was suddenly caught in a shower.

FRA. A shower ! of what ?

NAR. The hardest thumps I ever felt.

FRA. From what ?

NAR. I rather think from a cudgel ; and I had not gone farther than the gutter outside the door, when I heard the hail-storm rattling on the balustrade. He must have broken his weapon, whatever it was. It's lucky for me he didn't break any thing else ! But is Mrs. Pliant up yet, and has she asked for me ?

FRA. She's been up some time, and thinks you fast asleep ; and when you came down, I was to tell you she wished you to breakfast with her.

NAR. She's the very pink of haberdashers ! Here, take the key of my room, like a good fellow, and get me out another coat. (*Giving his dirtied coat.*)

FRA. And what's become of your hat ?

NAR. My cap, you mean. I went out in a morning cap that the pretty Italian Marinetta, up stairs, worked for me, and, in the confusion, I really can give no satisfactory account of it.

FRA. Ah! take care of these Italians. For fire and fury, they are perfect volcanoes!—(*Goes into room of NARCISSUS, 1st door, P. S.*)

NAR. He's right there—I would have cut with her long ago, but her fire and fury make me tremble at the thought. She has the devil's own share of it, that's certain.

(*Re-enter FRANK with another coat, which NARCISSUS puts on.*)

FRA. There; now you had better make haste to the widow, or there'll be mischief there, too. Stay!—by the bye, here's a letter from the country for you.—(*Takes letter from his waistcoat pocket, and gives it to NARCISSUS.*)

NAR. (*Conceitedly.*) All right! (*Puts it in his pocket.*)

FRA. Don't you mean to read it?

NAR. A woman's handwriting—their epistolary style is all the same; fly-flaps dipped in tears, nothing more. (*Laughing.*)

FRA. Ah! you're a pretty fellow; but I must see to business. (*Exit into Shop through C. D.*)

NAR. And I wish, with all my heart, I had been as ugly a dog as you are. Oh! Nature, why did you heap your gifts and graces upon me for my eternal torment? But what can I do? I wish I had been as frightful as the Saracen's head on Snow-hill. I wish I had been born with a hump on my shoulders; then they never would have been cudgelled as they were this morning, for resting a lovely head that didn't belong to them. In spite of myself, I'm a devil—I really am a devil. But I'm resolved—I've done with 'em all. Yes, yes; Mrs. Pliant, for my money; or, rather, for *her* money—I'll marry her at once, and sleep quietly. She has a fortune to console me, a spirit to protect me, and if the

rest of the sex *must* be the sufferers, let 'em keep out of my way. Why do they hover about me? Why do they write to me? (*Holds up his letter.*) You, you foolish thing, whoever you are, why do *you* write to me? That I must ascertain. (*Reads.*) "MR. BRIGGS!"—How very awful!—"There is a little darling waiting for your fatherly embrace!"—How very free and easy!—"and I am determined you shall do your duty by him, you good-for-nothing wretch!"—How very polite!—"I am, with due respect, your deluded victim!"—and no name!—How very luminous! The letter is dated Chelmsford—but at Chelmsford I was beset with half-a-dozen of them; however, she *is* at Chelmsford, so when I am married—here comes the widow. Now to bring her to the point!

(*Enter MRS. PLIANT, door O.P. 2 E.*)

MRS. P. Ah! you are here at last, Narcissus; I began to be uneasy at your getting up so late.

NAR. Too late, indeed! Ah! Rosalie, since you will have me call you so, when shall I awake by the light of those dazzlers?

MRS. P. For shame! But what ails you? your countenance looks pale and dejected.

NAR. And is it to be wondered at?

MRS. P. What is the cause?

NAR. Ask your looking-glass.

MRS. P. Do have done!

NAR. My nights are full of agitation; and, to-day, so was my morning.

MRS. P. Dear Narcissus! what was it?—a beating at your heart?

NAR. 'Twas a beating all over.

MRS. P. Well, come to breakfast.

NAR. Breakfast wont cure me,—I've no digestion. My dear widow, ever since you promised me your hand, my life has been consuming away by inches—and what do you think with? (*Aside.*) Now, I'll hit her hard! I'm jealous, Mrs. Pliant—there are rivals in the field! Rivals, Rosalie! and, above all others, that Kidd, the glover, is over head and ears in love with you!

MRS. P. But have I not given him up for you?

NAR. So you say—but I'm not at all easy in my mind; and if our wedding is any longer delayed—

MRS. P. Silence! you imprudent young man. Does not your uncle Johnston arrive to-day?

NAR. This very day. I yesterday heard of his arrival at Falmouth, from the continent; and this day he will reach London. I only wish I had half his riches to lay at the feet of my Rosalie!

(ELLEN enters at c. door, with a loaf of brown bread.  
She passes into door, R. 2 E.)

MRS. P. It is not wealth I desire, but a tender heart, not likely to go astray; and I am not quite sure of your's.

NAR. What! can you suppose—

MRS. P. But you are too gallant by half; and there is in this house a young Italian—

NAR. Marinetta—a maid-servant! Oh! dear, how could you imagine—

MRS. P. Why, it certainly would not be very becoming.

(Enter FRANK through C.D.)

FRA. You are wanted in the shop, ma'am.



MRS. P. I'll come presently—but first tell Ellen we'll have breakfast in this room.

FRA. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit through door, O.P. 2 E.*)

NAR. Ellen! who's she?

MRS. P. My new servant. I sent her out to get some brown bread, as I know you are fond of it.

NAR. (*Aside.*) Ellen! if it should be! Pooh! there are more Ellens than one in the world.

(D.R. 2 E. *Enter FRANK, followed by ELLEN with breakfast-things. NARCISSUS sees her.*)

FRA. Here she is, ma'am.

NAR. Here she is, indeed!

ELL. Ah! (*Screaming and letting the things fall on table, L.H.*)

MRS. P. You awkward thing!—what have you done?

FRA. (*Aside.*) What's the meaning of all this? They seem both very much confused.

ELL. I twisted my ankle, ma'am, and—

NAR. Scalded mine—nothing but hot water.

MRS. P. I'll just see what is wanted of me, and return in a few minutes. (*Exit into Shop C.D.*)

NAR. (*Going to ELLEN.*) Pray, Miss Ellen, what do you mean by coming up to town and hunting me out in this manner?

FRA. What's that I hear?

ELL. Who is this person? I don't know you, sir.

FRA. (*Aside.*) He seems as familiar with her as if she did.

NAR. Don't know me! What, then, you have some reason for not wishing to know me?

ELL. (*Aside.*) I should think so; with my husband in the room.

NAR. I see—the presence of a stranger. I say, Frank, leave us together for a few minutes, there's a good fellow.

FRA. Thank you, I'd rather stay; the meeting amuses me.

ELL. (*To NAR.*) And why, sir, shouldn't I speak before him? I have no secrets; and, I repeat it, I do not know who you are.

NAR. With all my heart!—my fancy exactly. Let the past be buried in oblivion; and henceforth, my love, we are perfect strangers.

FRA. (*Aside.*) To think now, that I daren't kick him out of the room!

NAR. (*To ELLEN.*) Well, consent to this, and I promise to find a husband for you. Frank and I will look out for a husband for you—some easy, good-natured fellow, who will neither hear, nor see, and, of course, say nothing. Eh! Frank?

FRA. (*Aside.*) I can stand this no longer. (*To NAR.*) Sir, you—

NAR. Hold your tongue!—(*JOHNSTON in the Shop, talking with MRS. PLIANT.*)—there's some one coming.

JOHN. (*In shop.*) Yes, my dear madam, I am impatient to see my nephew.

NAR. That's the voice of my uncle, as I'm alive. Ellen, mind and be discreet!—Frank, not a word!

FRA. (*Aside.*) This is atrocious!

(*Enter JOHNSTON through C.D., followed by MRS. P.*)

JOHN. Come to my arms, my dear boy. (*Embracing NARCISSUS.*)

FRA. (*Aside.*) Now to look out for the waggoner with our little one. Let me see you presently, Mrs. Ellen,—I must have some conversation with you. (*Exit into Shop.*)

ELL. I assure you, Frank— (*Exit through O.P. door.*)

MRS. P. I hope, Mr. Johnston, you'll allow me to offer you breakfast.

JOHN. I *have* breakfasted, ma'am, thank you. I arrived at an early hour in the morning, with a devil of an appetite, and went into a coffee-house in a devil of a temper; where, for a couple of shillings, I ate like a Turk.

NAR. That will do you no harm.

JOHN. Perhaps not; but I got into a rage with one of the waiters, being out of temper about another business; and, as I am very passionate, I broke two-and-twenty plates!

NAR. Two-and-twenty!

JOHN. A pile that was by my side; so that my two-shilling breakfast cost me two-and-twenty! However, I rated them roundly, for I was as furious as a lion!

NAR. You always had a head of your own!

JOHN. I have, and an arm, too—I must not be insulted! I'm very passionate, and those who insult me, I never insult again—one blow is worth a dozen words—one, two, and down they go! I'm hot, ma'am.

MRS. P. So it seems, sir. But calm yourself, and take a seat.

JOHN. (*Gets a chair for Widow, &c.*) You're right, ma'am; you're right. And now let us talk over your business. (*They seat themselves.*) I take a great interest in it; and as soon as Narcissus wrote me word of the proposed marriage, I hastened home. Don't delay it, as I did. I'm for hurrying such things, as I, personally, know the consequences of a delay.

NAR. You, uncle!

JOHN. Yes, my boy. When I left England, eleven months ago, I was also on the point of being married.

NAR. Is it possible ?

JOHN. I didn't mention it to you, because you are my heir, and it might have annoyed you.

NAR. You're very considerate.

JOHN. To a young woman I adored. Unluckily, my departure postponed the ceremony till my return. I arrived without apprizing her ; and, as it was sooner than she expected me, I meant to give her an agreeable surprise. When I got out of the stage-coach, my first idea was to go to her house.

NAR. (*Aside.*) This is an odd coincidence !

JOHN. I knocked at the door,—I called,—but I got no answer ; and beginning to suspect all was not right, I hid myself in a corner of the staircase.

NAR. (*Aside.*) The widow's man, to my horror !

JOHN. In about an hour (I choke while I mention it), I see coming out of Maria's room—that is her name—a being of the masculine gender !

Mrs. P. How very horrible !

JOHN. The day just breaking enabled me to recognise him.

NAR. You recognised him ?

JOHN. I recognised him to be a man : he ran down stairs ; and as he passed me, I cannot tell the precise number of blows I gave him with my stick ; but, if it be true that mortals are frail beings, the fellow must be, by this time, in little bits.

NAR. One word. Was it with the old Wanghee ?

JOHN. It was : the thick knotty one that you used to ride, and treat like a horse.

NAR. (*Aside.*) It has returned the compliment.

JOHN. I remember you were in love with that stick.

NAR. Yes; but I an't now—I'm rather inconstant.

MRS. P. What?

NAR. In that respect only. I've lost my affection for the stick, though I shall never forget it.

JOHN. (*Rising with MRS. PLIANT.*) After such a discovery, I did not enter her apartments, for I'm such a passionate fellow, I should have been the death of her. So I shall wait till my anger has cooled a little.

NAR. If I were in your place, I shouldn't go back to her.

MRS. P. Pardon me, but we are sometimes the dupes of appearances.

JOHN. (*To NAR.*) The widow's right—appearances *do* deceive us. Besides, I may, perhaps, learn the fellow's name; and, if I do, the Lord help him,—he my say *his* prayers.

NAR. (*Aside.*) I'm goose-flesh all over.

JOHN. However, this has nothing to do with your marriage. We'll sign the contract this very day—that's settled; and I'll go and procure the proper witnesses.

MRS. P. I'll send out Ellen to invite a few friends, while I go myself to my attorney's, and have a contract duly prepared, and bring it back with me.

NAR. (*Aside.*) I wish it was signed already.

JOHN. Good bye, then, for the present. (*Looking for his stick.*) Where is my stick? Ah! I forgot—it's gone.

NAR. Joy go with it, I say.

JOHN. Well, well, good day.

NAR. My horizon begins to darken—the clouds lower, and

threaten me with another thunder shower I shall never escape from. Luckily the widow doats on me. My uncle, at present, suspects nothing; and, if I can only blind him— (*Seeing MARINETTA enter at second door, p. s.*) Marinetta! the devil!—that's another cloud, and the blackest of them all.

MAR. You sal be in good spirit, Narcisse.

NAR. That's because I expected to see you. (*Aside.*) Swallow that, and be quiet.

MAR. Always gallant; but I glad you see me alone, for I sal wish to speak wiz you.

NAR. (*Aside.*) A pleasant situation, considering the widow is coming back. Speak, my pretty Marinetta.

MAR. I sal have moche to say; but you sal tell me, Narcisse, is love a ting to be alive for ever?

NAR. Mine, for you, will for ever and ever.

MAR. None of zat stuff, sare. Speak in ze frank way, and I sal make you ze exampel.

NAR. An example? What do you mean?

MAR. 'Tis very délicât. Wat I sal say 'tis very true, Narcisse, zat ze heart's feel is very ephemere—don't stop wiz you very long time. If you sal love me as you sal do von time, very good; but you sal not—and your conduct has caught very bad cold, sare.

NAR. Marinetta!

MAR. 'Tis noting to me *now*, for ze truth sal speak to you, and I——

NAR. (*Eagerly.*) No longer love *me*?

MAR. Don't throw over me ze reproche.

NAR. I wont; for, as you say, the feelings of the heart are

ephemeral, which is a hard word, but we'll make it easy. For, to relieve your mind, and be as frank as you, my love also has gone smack round like the weather-cock.

MAR. (*Bursting out.*) Ze weazer-cock!—It sal? Brigand! ze monster! He sal tell it his self!

NAR. Why you haven't laid a snare for me?

MAR. A snare! I wish he was a big rat-trap to seize all over you—you sal not know me. You sal not know ze long ways how I sal go fetch my revenge. He sal be von terrible ting—nothing sal stop his vay. If I sal die, dere sal die another. Behold! (*Draws a dagger from her bosom.*) Behold!

NAR. A dagger! I'm horror-struck!—for me?

MAR. For you or your accomplice. Se sal beware.

NAR. You are mad.

MAR. I am. I know your treashery. I am know of your intrigue; and if you sal marry Mrs. Pliant—

NAR. I wont. I never meant it. They have been hoaxing you.

MAR. You are serious?

NAR. Very serious indeed.

MAR. I have some bres again.

NAR. (*Aside.*) When it's lie or die, nothing like a wapper.

MRS. P. (*Outside.*) Let them wait a few minutes.

MAR. Here she come. Now for to prove vat you sal say.

NAR. How prove?

MAR. You sal stay here, and I sal hide me in zat room. (*Pointing to first door, p. s.*) And you sal say noting of de love and de marriage; and say dere be no love at all, or I strike your heart. Dat for you. (*Shewing the dagger.*)

NAR. Don't look so wildly—don't act so wildly.

MAR. Hold your tongue, and do as I sal say you.

(*She rushes into the room, l e., p. s.*)

NAR. There's a bravo in petticoats! If I'm to be carried, stiletto in hand, there's an end of the widow; after that talk of Cupid and his bow-and-arrows! There *she is*—(*Enter MRS. PLIANT at o. p. door.*)—and here's the widow!

MRS. P. Well, Narcissus, here I am, come back; and here's the contract all ready.

NAR. (*Coughing loudly.*) Hum. H—u—m.

MRS. P. I am afraid I have kept you waiting.

NAR. (*Looking at p. s. door.*) Oh! no—on the contrary.

MRS. P. “On the contrary!”—that's not a very flattering expression, Narcissus.

NAR. I mean—that is, do not give yourself any trouble—(*Aside.*)—Oh, Lord! Oh, Lord!—on my account, because—

MRS. P. It would be very unnatural in our present situation, if—

NAR. (*Coughing again.*) H—u—m. H—u—m.

MRS. P. (*Tenderly.*) I did not shew some anxiety.

NAR. (*Coughing again.*) Hum! hum! hum!

MRS. P. What a bad cough you have, Narcissus!

NAR. Yes; indeed I suffer dreadfully.

MRS. P. In your chest?

NAR. (*Standing between her and the p. s. door.*) No; at present it's on my left side.

MRS. P. I hope it's nothing of consequence. I am bound now, you know, to nurse, and take care of you.

(*Here MARINETTA half opens the door, and shews her dagger.*)

NAR. (*Aside.*) It's all over with me. The door opens,



and out she'll come. (*Loud to MRS. P.*) Madam, what's the meaning of all this? People will suppose——

MRS. P. Suppose!—and what need we care for their suppositions? Our vows are pledged.

NAR. Pledged—what d'ye mean by pledged? Why, at this rate, you'd have the world believe—(*aside*)—the door's shut again—I breathe. (*MARINETTA closes the door again.*)

MRS. P. Believe what?—what can such language mean? Is this Narcissus?—are you trifling with my affections?

NAR. (*Hastily.*) Your affections! Pray control your expressions. (*Aside, and with a groan.*) O—h! the door opens again.

MRS. P. What can be the meaning of this sudden change? An hour ago you were all love and tenderness.

NAR. Me, Madam?

MRS. P. You. Why your head's confused.

NAR. I see it still. (*Looking at the dagger.*)

MRS. P. Quite wandering! and at the very moment which unites us for ever.

(*Here NARCISSUS continues coughing, and getting nearer the door, p. s., which at last he pushes to, and turns the key.*)

NAR. O—h! I'm safe at last.

MRS. P. Why have you shut that door? The confusion in your countenance is unusual. Narcissus, there is some one in that room.

NAR. What in this?

MRS. P. Do you make no answer?

NAR. (*Changing his tone.*) A row will cover all. (*Aside.*) Oh! yes, Madam, there *is* some one; and do you mean to tell me you don't know who the fellow is?

MRS. P. The fellow!

NAR. Yes, Mrs. Pliant. The fellow is that madman, Kidd, the glover; and a report of our marriage having reached him, he has run here, and has hid himself in that room—(*Pointing to P. S. door*)—to overhear our conversation.

MRS. P. What! so polite a man as Mr. Kidd do a thing of that sort? Let me speak with him.

NAR. Don't think of it. He is armed, and threatens to attempt your life.

MRS. P. What!—the gentle Kidd?

(*A knocking is heard at the P. S. door.*)

NAR. D'ye hear him knocking? (*Raising his voice.*) Very well, sir, I'll be with you presently. (*To Mrs. P.*) Leave us together, ma'am, and I'll soon settle his business.

MRS. P. I wont quit your side. (*Knocking heard again.*)

NAR. (*Looking to centre door.*) Somebody coming! (*To Mrs. PLIANT.*) Go, madam, go into your own room, coquette as you are.

(*Enter FRANK, from Shop, C.D.*)

FRANK. Madam, here is a countryman who wishes to speak with you.

MRS. P. What does he want?

FRANK. I don't know, ma'am. Here, come in, young man.

(*Enter WAGGONER, C.D., carrying a cradle on his shoulder.*)

WAG. Sarvant, ma'am.

FRANK. (*Aside to WAGGONER.*) Now don't forget what I told you to say.

WAG. (*Aside.*) Don't'e be afeard o' I. (*To* MRS. PLIANT.) I be the Chemsford waggoner, and I ha' brought up this little babby from its nurse to its feyther, and she says he be one of your shop lads.

MRS. P. One of my shop boys?

NAR. (*Aside.*) It's the brat mentioned in the Chelmsford letter.

WAG. (*Poring over it.*) Yeas, Maister Narcissus Briggs—that's the durrection.

MRS. P. (*Screams faintly.*) Oh, I shall faint!

FRA. (*Slipping half-a-crown into the WAGGONER'S hand.*) You're a capital fellow—that's for your trouble. Now, be off.

WAG. I wish you a vurry good day, marm. (*Exit, c. d.*)

MRS. P. Where am I, and what has become of me? Speak, Narcissus, speak, I beseech you.

NAR. I will.

MRS. P. Well, Sir.

NAR. (*Sighing.*) Lovely Rosalie! I can struggle no longer.

MRS. P. But this child—this child—

NAR. What of it?—It's a little exuberance—ascribed to me, most unaccountably.

MRS. P. (*Sarcastically.*) Unaccountably!

NAR. Yes, Rosalie, I assure you, my little flirtations don't justify it. But what matters? Here he is—he seems to feel himself quite at home, and suppose we adopt him.

MRS. P. Adopt him?

NAR. If it's agreeable to you—Fortune may not favour us, perhaps.

MRS. P. Mr. Briggs!

NAR. Well, in the mean time, then, let me take him to Ellen.

FRA. (*Aside.*) Excellent!

MRS. P. Take him where you please, but never see my face till you can explain this matter to my entire satisfaction.

(*Exit D. 2. E. R.*)

FRA. Now to leave him in his perplexity till he has made up his mind about it.

(*Exit D. 2. E. R.*)

NAR. This is to be a good-looking fellow, to be envied by all mankind, and incur the penalty of their anonymous peccadilloes. (*Addressing child.*) Dear little offspring of mystery, who do you belong to? He smiles. Oh, the sympathies of nature! I can't disown him. I'll take him to Nurse immediately. (*NAR. is just going out with cradle as he sees his Uncle.*) My uncle—the devil! (*Stops short.*)

(*Enter OLD JOHNSTON through C.D.*)

JOHN. (*Down on R.*) Holloa, Narcissus, where are you going, and whose child is that?

NAR. This child, uncle! Why, between ourselves, it's a bit of a mystery—a romance. I'll tell you all about it by-and-bye—it will make you die of laughing.

JOHN. Where are you going?

NAR. I'll be back directly. (*Taking his uncle aside.*) A word in your ear. There's a person locked up in that room.

JOHN. A man?

NAR. Yes; a young man in disguise. When I'm gone, let him out, will you? Tell him I'm off, and would advise him to be off too. You'll do me an immense service.

JOHN. I understand. I'll do it.

NAR. Be resolute, as if you were in authority here. Insist on his going.

JOHN. Let me alone.

NAR. He's here on mischief. I'll be back directly and explain all. (*Goes off with cradle, 2nd door, p. s.*)

JOHN. A mystery! a romance! damn me, this is something like my adventure with Maria. I have just left the perfidious hussy, and have found unequivocal proofs of her infidelity; and if I only knew the rascal who—. But, first, my prisoner. I wonder what the devil he's locked up for. (*Goes and opens the 1st door, p. s.*) You may come out.

(*MARINETTA rushing out of the room, p. s.*)

MAR. Oh, ze villain—ze monster! Ware sal he be?

JOHN. He's off; and we advise you to be off too.

MAR. Indeed! But I sal not, sare. He must come back, and here I take ze seat for him.

JOHN. But you shall not. Do you know who I am?

MAR. Who? You stupid John Bull.

JOHN. Oh! for the old wanghee! But I tell you I'm in authority here; and though I don't know what this bobbery's about, I'll stand by my nephew, Narcissus.

MAR. Your nephew! Ze imposter! Your nephew—ze wretch—who have ze audacity to lock me in zat room. Oh! I sal suffocate.

JOHN. Well; don't suffocate me.

MAR. I sal have poke ze wall zrough wiz my scream; when ze rage choke me, and I faint all away.

JOHN. Faint all away! A young man faint!

MAR. Ze young man! Is your head turn all round, turvy-topsy? I am a woman, sare—A Signora—whom he have much wrong—I am enragé—a danger woman.

JOHN. Well, upon my life, here's more than masculine metal here—that's certain. She *is* a woman—and, i'fegs! I smell powder here. Ah, ah! that rascal, Narcissus!

MAR. It's no laugh, sare.

JOHN. Perhaps not; but there's one consolation—it happens every day.

MAR. How! when I sal say to you zat his conduct sal be ze infam—he marry wiz ze Widow Pliant—zay have ze little shile.

JOHN. Oh, I know all that; but make yourself easy—it's no use taking things in this serious manner,—who is *not* deceived in this world, I should like to know? Why I myself am a victim, at this very moment, of a similar treachery.

MAR. You!

JOHN. I!

MAR. (*Bursting out laughing.*) Ha! ha! ha!—poor old gentleman—you!

JOHN. Mine's no laughing matter either, ma'am.

MAR. Perhaps not; but zar's one consolation, it happen every day. Ha! ha!

JOHN. They shall both pay dearly for it, if I only discover the fellow; and, thank fortune, chance has now furnished me with some evidence to steer by. Look here, this morning cap found in Maria's apartment. (*Taking a morning cap out of his coat pocket.*)

MAR. A morning cap! I sal look at him. Why, *I* work him.

JOHN. You! you work him.

MAR. Yes; and make ze present of him to your nephew, Narcisse, a mons go by.

JOHN. To my nephew?

MAR. (*Pacing the stage.*) Ah! anozer rival! Ze harden profligate!

JOHN. The vagabond—the coward—the roué—without the least respect for his uncle, to dare—and now I think of it, that child in the cradle—and my absence of nearly a year. Oh, it speaks for itself—the atrocious scoundrel! I'll exterminate him.

MAR. Do. Have no mercy a top of him.

JOHN. Mercy! I'll turn out, and procure a couple of friends immediately. He's no blood relation; and I'll teach him—you shall be revenged, my dear.

MAR. I will have ze great revenge.

JOHN. Rely on me. (*Rushes out of the c. d.*)

MAR. No; I rely for myself. I have ze project in zis head, which will have ze greater effet. I sal be sure of him.

NAR. (*Coming in at 2nd door, p.s.*) My little beauty's safely disposed of.

MAR. Here he comb; I sal dissemble.

NAR. Marinetta!—here still. (*Aside.*) I am never to be rid of her.

MAR. Again you not glad I come, Narcisse?

NAR. By no means.

MAR. Insolent! But no mattare—it is noting for ze present—I for ever despise of you.

NAR. Bravo!

MAR. What, you call me ze bravo?

NAR. That is, you're quite right. Disdain is better than daggers, be assured—better for the health. Beg pardon, Marinetta; I believe you have seen my uncle—an old gentleman I left here?

MAR. He go out for little vile, but he comb back again wiz a couple of his friend, he say.

NAR. Friends! Oh, aye, he's of a convivial character—he's always ready to entertain his friends.

MAR. Yes, and his relation one time to-day.

NAR. Well; I've made him run about pretty well all day, and the least thing I can do is to prepare some refreshment for him by his return—a little wine-and-water, or a glass of punch. No; now I think of it—he likes a glass of bishop better than any thing in the world.

MAR. Does he? Well; zo I hate you—wiz reason too—I have not ze wicked motive—I go down ze stair to make some tea for my ladi—I will mix ze bowl of bishop for you at ze one same time.

NAR. That *is* kind of you, Marinetta. (*Takes her hand, and is about to kiss it.*)

MAR. (*Drawing it back.*) Take care what you sal do—here is Mrs. Pliant.

NAR. (*Aside.*) Bless 'em, they are all so precipitate, yet so placable.

(*Enter MRS. PLIANT, door O.P., followed by ELLEN.*)

MRS. P. So they all accept my invitation—I'm sorry now I asked them; but, as we must receive them, set this room in order, Ellen.

ELLEN. Yes, ma'am. (*Arranges the chairs, table, &c. &c.*)

MRS. P. (*Seeing MAR.*) That woman here again.

NAR. (*Aside.*) Now they are pitted—a pair of hen turtles that will fight like game-cocks.

MRS. P. Narcissus, can I not speak to you alone?



NAR. And why not?

MAR. I understand a you—ze widow desire a tête-à-tête wiz you.

MRS. P. You seem to be out of temper at my having interrupted yours.

NAR. (*Aside.*) If they would only vent their rage on one another.

MAR. You have alarm, I tink, I sal take of you away your conquest?

MRS. P. Which you have not been able to keep to yourself.

NAR. (*Trying to stir them up.*) At her!

MAR. Ah! madam, you have ze grand wit to win ze heart of all lover—you have decide on all sacrifice to—

MRS. P. There are *some* persons in the world who have nothing *to* sacrifice!

NAR. (*To MAR.*) Don't mind her.

MAR. (*Boxing his ear.*) Zat for you! Stand off, sare!

NAR. Oh!

MRS. P. Such familiarity in *my* presence!

NAR. (*Looking at MRS. P.*) For your sake I endure it.

MRS. P. (*Boxing his other ear.*) You do? That will teach you more spirit!

MAR. (*Turning up her nose at MRS. P.*) You endure everything—zat little shile from Shelmford!

MRS. P. Well!

ELL. (*Advancing.*) A child!—from Chelmsford?—*my* son!

ALL. Her son!

ELL. And my husband suffer it!

MRS. P. Her husband!

MAR. (*Bursting out with rage and smothered laughter.*) He marry two wife!

ELL. I'll fly and find it out; they must, they shall give it me back! (*Runs out C. D.*)

MRS. P. (*Going up to NAR.*) There's an end to every thing. Leave my house to-morrow! (*Exit at door O.P.*)

MAR. (*Going up to NAR.*) And I kill you life all away before to-morrow! (*Exit at 2nd door, P.S.*)

NAR. My horizon's blacker than ever—I'm lost in the darkness, and I'm bothered—at all events, all's broken off between me and both Marinetta and the widow. Well, so much the better!—I shall now look out for something higher; I've got my eye on a foreign countess who comes here with smuggled lace. Then, my uncle loves me, and his purse is entirely at my service; my horizon clears up,—I see a bit of blue sky!

(*Enter JOHNSTON through C. D.*)

JOHN. Do you? you wont see it long—rascal!

NAR. Ha! uncle, you're arrived just in time; I was that moment thinking of you. Have you brought the two friends with you?

JOHN. They're waiting for us. Come, sir!

NAR. Sir! (*Aside.*) What's in the wind now? Where do you wish me to go?

JOHN. (*Pulling the morning cap out of his coat-pocket.*) There's my answer!

NAR. My hair stands on end!

JOHN. Follow me, I say.

NAR. What's your object? Give me an explanation.

JOHN. (*Pulling a couple of pistols from under his frock-coat.*) Here's a short one.

NAR. Pistols! Why, you must be mad to suppose I'd fight with you!

JOHN. This instant come.

NAR. *I!*—your nephew! What, d'ye think I'll commit *uncle-side*?

JOHN. Do you refuse, coward?

NAR. Coward!—remember, I belong to your family.

JOHN. No; your outrage has broken all ties between us.

NAR. One word more. They say I'm the father of a family; that is, I have reason to believe I'm the author of the little darling you saw just now.

JOHN. And do you dare tell me of it? You exasperate my fury—the child of Maria—

NAR. Of Maria?

JOHN. Come, no more delay; for if you wont follow me, we fight here on the spot.

NAR. It sha'n't be; you're my uncle. I'll sign any apology, and beg your pardon.

JOHN. That wont do—choose!

NAR. I don't fancy either.

JOHN. You know the alternative—honour demands it

NAR. I defy it!

JOHN. A sound thrashing!

NAR. I've had it. Honour don't leather a man twice a-day for the same offence.

JOHN. We shall see that. (*Going for a stick he has laid down.*)

NAR. Stay! do you think me so base. No; take your ground—and if you will have my life, I take a pistol, that you may not be hanged for it.

JOHN. Well, damn me, that's generous too.

NAR. Now then—(*Takes a pistol; place themselves in position*)—One, two—

(FRANK enters, with a bowl and two glasses on a salver.)

FRA. What do I see? Stop! stop!

NAR. Don't be alarmed; my uncle's only giving me a lesson on pistol-firing.

FRA. That's another affair. Here's the bowl of bishop which Marinetta asked me to bring in—(*Places it on the table*)—and if it's good for nothing, it's no fault of mine, for Marinetta would make it herself.

NAR. Marinetta! then I forgive her every thing for this interruption.

FRA. She says its much better made in the Italian manner.

NAR. (*Aside.*) How that girl adores me! (*He and JOHNSTON go to the table where the bowl is, and NARCISSUS fills the glasses.*)

FRA. I have had a talk with Ellen, and she has now satisfied me. (*Exit, c.d.*)

NAR. I'm very happy to hear it.

JOHN. Harkye, nephew! I'm hot, and so is the bishop; and, somehow, one seems to cool the other,—and I am thinking that, as you've been caned, and offered to stand fire besides, suppose we end our broil, and begin our bowl?

NAR. With all my heart.

JOHN. Your hand; and now, instead of discharging our pistols, let us charge our glasses—to the health of Marinetta!

NAR. We will. (*Drinks.*)

JOHN. I begin to feel quite calm again.

NAR. I dare say; *Bishop* is a composer, you know.

JOHN. So I find.

NAR. Come, the widow waits for us. Another bumper to her health will about finish the bowl.

JOHN. Dispatch then—The widow!

NAR. The widow!—so soon again to be a wife! (*They drink again.*)

JOHN. (*After drinking.*) Hasn't this bishop a very odd taste?

NAR. Not at all—Come, let us finish it. (*He turns up the bowl into each of their glasses, and empties it.*) What's this? a note between the bowl and the salver!

JOHN. A note? (*Drinks*)

NAR. (*Opening the note.*) “I sent you word this bishop was made in the Italian manner; and when you have drank it, you are poisoned.” Oh!

JOHN. (*Throwing down his glass.*) Poisoned!

NAR. (*Continuing.*) Here's more—“This is the vengeance of Marinetta.”

JOHN. (*Crying out.*) Poisoned!

NAR. Poisoned!

JOHN. Murderer! this, then, was all you wanted—to destroy your uncle!

NAR. Oh, don't attack me! I am punished enough! I'd give *my* life to save both our lives!

JOHN. Oh—ah! I burn!

NAR. Oh, this agony!

JOHN. I'm dying! help!

NAR. I'm dead! help! (*They both sink down on a chair; MRS. PLIANT and ELLEN run in at the O.P. door; FRANK at the C.D., and MARINETTA at the 2nd door, P.S., keeping herself aside.*)

MRS. P. What is the matter?

JOHN. Oh, my dear madam, we're both poisoned! Oh!

ALL. Gracious!

NAR. That horrible Marinetta mixed poison in the bishop!  
Oh!

FRA. Oh! oh! I tasted it before I brought it in—Oh!

ELL. (*Gets round to L. H.*) What, my poor husband!

MRS. P. Her husband! (*To ELLEN.*) Then you are not  
the wife of Narcissus?

FRA. His wife!

ELL. His wife!

NAR. No, Frank, I'm not your wife's husband.

MRS. P. But this mysterious child—

FRA. Is ours!

NAR. Then he wont be an orphan.

MRS. P. Is it possible?

JOHN. Why do you plague us about all that—we're *dying*,  
my dear woman.

MRS. P. Run for an apothecary.

MARI. (*Coming forward.*) Stop! Zere is no time—all as-  
sistance sal be vain. Ze poison he work more fast as ze  
doctor!

NAR. Marinetta!

JOHN. The horrible creature!

MARI. I alone possess de antidote—but, then, Signor  
Briggs sal have ze love for me, if he sal have no oder wife  
but me.

JOHN. Marry her, Narcissus—marry her;—that's what  
she wants.

NAR. No. I'd rather die, particularly as it's half over.

JOHN. My dear nephew, I'll give you half my fortune.

FRA. And I'll give all mine!

NAR. Will you? Then for my uncle's sake, Marinetta, there's my hand.

MAR. It is right for me, zare—zere is de antidote.

(*Gives him a bottle, which he seizes, and quickly applies to his mouth.*)

JOHN. (*Taking it from him.*) It's my turn now. (*Drinks.*)

NAR. (*Aside.*) I feel better already.

JOHN. (*Passing the bottle to NAR.*) It's excellent.

MAR. If you sal be good young boy, I sal be so mild and gentle—you sal be quite surprise.

NAR. I shall indeed.

MAR. (*Getting nearer to him.*) But if you sal not be faithful to me—(*shewing him the dagger.*)

NAR. Don't be afraid, my dear. No man would be such a fool as to be unfaithful to a lady who carries about with her a dagger in one hand, and a bottle of arsenic in the other. (*To the Audience.*) Ladies, this is all your doing, and I must look to you to get out of the scrapes you have got me into and to continue to support the

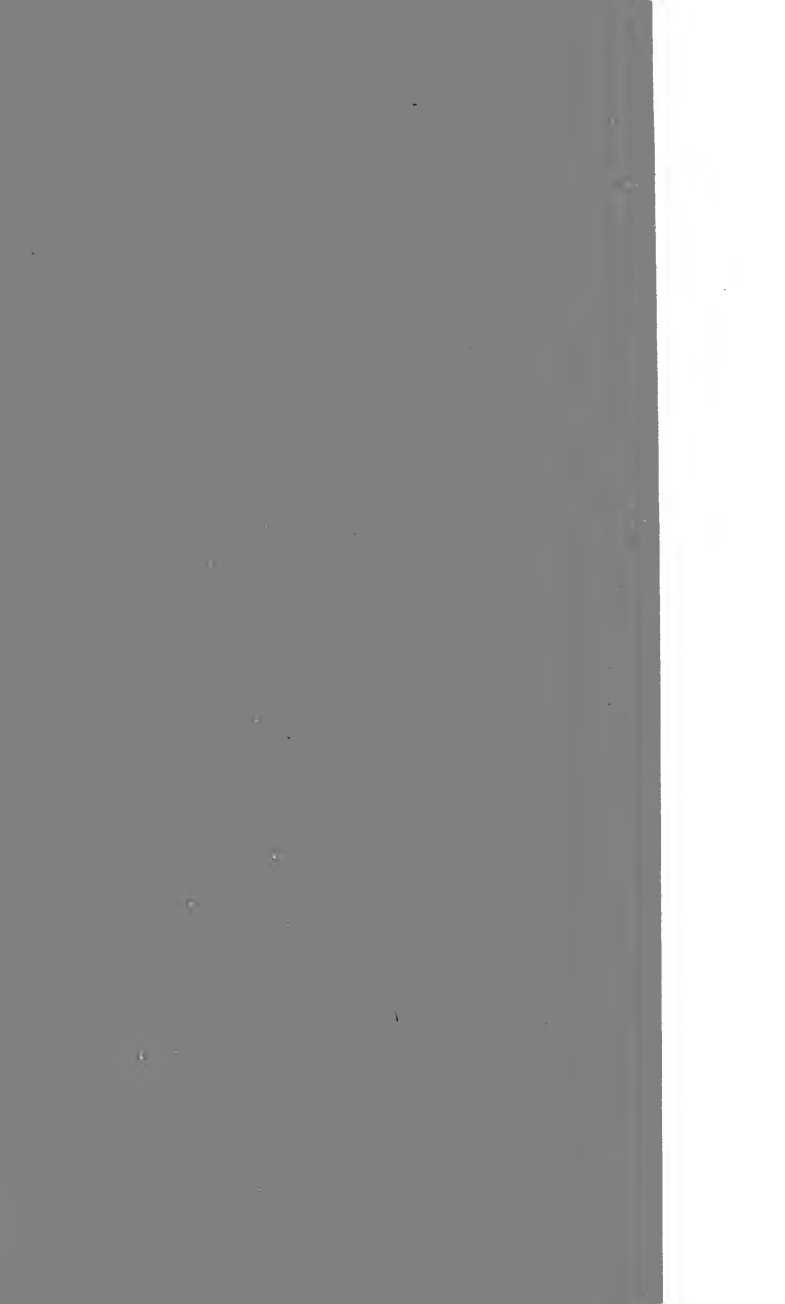
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THE END.









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